

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of managing access by a client to user-specific information maintained in connection with a plurality of services offered by a web-services provider and used by a user of said plurality of services, the method comprising:

maintaining a plurality of items user-specific information in more than one of the plurality of services;

obtaining a plurality of client access requests directed to accessing the plurality of items of user-specific information maintained in the more than one of the plurality of services, said plurality of access requests being translated from a task request that requires the client to access the plurality of items of user-specific information in order to complete the task request;

invoking a consent management system if the client lacks consent to access one of the plurality of items of user-specific information required by the client to complete the task request, said consent management system selectively obtaining consent for the client to access the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent to access; and

filling the plurality of client access requests if the client has permission to access each of the plurality of items of user-specific information in the more than one of the plurality of services.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising:

initiating the task request requiring the client to access the plurality of items of user-specific information in order to complete the task request; and

translating the task request into the plurality of client access requests to complete the task request.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein selectively obtaining consent for the client to access the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information comprises:

identifying the task request;

placing the identified task request in a task queue;

5 identifying a party with authority to grant consent to the client to access the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent to access; and

displaying a consent menu to the identified party with authority, said consent menu prompting the identified party to grant or deny consent for the client to access the
10 one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent to access.

4. The method of 3 wherein the identified party with authority to grant consent is the user of the plurality of services offered by the web-services provider and wherein displaying the consent menu to the identified party comprises displaying the consent menu to the user.

5. The method of claim 3 wherein the identified party with authority to grant consent is an owner of the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent to access and wherein displaying the consent menu to the identified party comprises displaying the consent menu to the owner.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the owner is the user of the plurality of services and wherein displaying the consent menu to the identified party comprises displaying the consent menu to the user.

7. The method of claim 3 wherein the user of the plurality of services is a managed user and the identified party with authority to grant consent is a manager of the managed user and wherein displaying the consent menu to the identified party comprises displaying the consent menu to the manager of the managed user.

8. The method of claim 3 wherein displaying the consent menu to the identified party comprises:

displaying an indication of the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent to access;

- 5 displaying an identity of the client; and
displaying an intended use of the client of the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent to access.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein displaying a consent menu to the identified party further comprises displaying a method of access requested by the client to complete the initiated task request.

10. The method of claim 8 wherein displaying a consent menu to the identified party further comprises displaying an indication of a status of each of the plurality of client access requests translated from the task request.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein displaying an indication of the status of each of the plurality of client access requests comprises displaying an indication of whether the client has consent from the identified party to access the plurality of items of user-specific information in the more than one of the plurality of services.

12. The method of claim 3 wherein identifying the task request comprises:
transmitting a task identifier to the consent management system, said task identifier identifying the plurality of client access requests to complete the task request;
and

- 5 identifying the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent to access.

13. The method of claim 3 further comprising:
providing a consent acceptance message being indicative of whether the identified party granted consent for the client to access the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent; and

- 5 updating an access control list associated with the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent if the consent acceptance message indicates that the identified party granted consent, whereby upon updating said

access control list, the client has consent to access the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising removing the identified task from the task queue if the consent acceptance message indicates that the identified party granted consent.

15. The method of claim 13 further comprising transmitting a consent success message to the client, said consent success message being indicative of whether the identified party granted consent for the client to access the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein updating the access control list further comprises setting a time limit in which the client has consent to access the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information.

17. The method of claim 3 wherein displaying the consent menu to the identified party further comprises displaying an invitation to allow the client enjoy a one-time only access to the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent.

18. The method of claim 3 wherein selectively obtaining consent for the client to access the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information further comprises sending an alert message to the party with authority to grant consent, said alert message alerting the party with authority to grant consent that the client seeks access to the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent.

19. The method of claim 3 further comprising:
providing a consent acceptance message being indicative of whether the identified party granted consent for the client to access the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information for which the client lacked consent;

5 granting consent to allow the client to access the one of the plurality of items of user-specific information if the consent acceptance message indicates that the identified party granted consent.

20. One or more computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions for performing the method recited in claim 1.

21. A task-based method of managing consent transactions in a network computing environment, said network computing environment including a web-services provider providing a first service and a second service, a user of the first service and the second service, and a client of the web-services provider, the method comprising:

5 maintaining a first data store of user-specific information in connection with the first service;

 maintaining a second data store of user-specific information in connection with the second service;

10 obtaining a first access request from the client and directed to the first service, said first access request indicating a first item of user-specific information maintained in the first data store to which the client seeks access in order to complete a task request;

15 obtaining a second access request from the client and directed to the second service, said second access request indicating a second item of user-specific information maintained in the second data store to which the client seeks access in order to complete the task request;

 determining if the client has consent to access the first item of user-specific information and the second item of user-specific information;

20 invoking a consent management system if it is determined that consent does not currently exist to allow the client to access the first item of user-specific information, said consent management system conducting a consent management transaction comprising:

 identifying a party with authority to grant consent to the client to access the first item of user-specific information; and

displaying a consent menu to the identified party with authority, said consent menu prompting the identified party to grant or deny consent to the client to access the first item of user-specific information.

22. The method of claim 21 further comprising:
initiating a task request from the user that requires the client to access the first item of user-specific information and the second item of user-specific information; and
translating the task request into the first access request and the second access request.

23. The method of claim 21 wherein invoking the consent management system further comprises identifying the task request and wherein conducting a consent management transaction further comprises:

retrieving a task manifest corresponding to the task request, said task manifest
identifying the first and second items of user-specific information; and
preparing an entry for display on the consent menu based on the task manifest.

24. The method of claim 21 further comprising filling the second access request only if the client has consent to access both the first item of user-specific information and the second item of user-specific information.

25. One or more computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions for performing the method recited in claim 21.

26. A method of managing consent transactions in a network computing environment, said network computing environment including a web-services provider providing a plurality of services, a user of the plurality of services, said web-services provider maintaining user-specific information associated with the user in connection with the plurality of services, and a client of the web-services provider, said user initiating a task request with the client, said client directing a plurality of access requests to the plurality of services in order to complete the task request, the method comprising:

invoking a consent management process if the client lacks a consent required to complete one of the plurality of access requests, said consent management process comprising:

identifying a party with authority to grant consent to allow the client to complete the one of the plurality of access requests for which the client lacks consent; and

initiating a consent request transaction with the identified party with authority to grant consent, said consent request transaction inviting the party with authority to grant consent to allow the client to complete the one of the plurality of access requests.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein initiating a consent request transaction further comprises displaying a consent menu to the identified party with authority to grant consent, said consent menu prompting the identified party to grant or deny consent for the client to complete the one of the plurality of access requests.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein the identified party with authority to grant consent is the user of the plurality of services and wherein displaying the consent menu to said identified party comprises displaying the consent menu to the user.

29. The method of claim 27 wherein the identified party with authority to grant consent is an owner of the user-specific information associated with the user and wherein displaying the consent menu to said identified party comprises displaying the consent menu to the owner.

30. The method of claim 27 wherein the user of the plurality of services is a managed user and the identified party with authority to grant consent is a manager of the managed user and wherein displaying the consent menu to said identified party comprises displaying the consent menu to the manager of the managed user.

31. The method of claim 27 wherein prompting the identified party to grant or deny consent for the client to complete the one of the plurality of access requests comprises providing a one-time only consent option whereby when said identified party selects the one-time only consent option the client is allowed to complete the one of the plurality of access requests only for completing the task request.

32. The method of claim 26 wherein initiating the consent transaction with the party with authority to grant consent further comprises sending an alert message to said party with authority, said alert message alerting said party that the client is seeking access to the user-specific information.

33. One or more computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions for performing the method recited in claim 26.

34. A system for controlling access to user-specific information in a network computing environment, the system comprising:

a web-services provider providing a service;

a user of the service, the web-services provider maintaining an item of user-specific information associated with the user in a data store associated with the service;

a client of the web-services provider, said client operatively communicating with the user and seeking access to the item of user-specific information;

an access control list associated with the item of user-specific information, said access control list indicating whether consent exists to allow the client to access the item of user-specific information; and

a consent management system for controlling an update of the access control list, said consent management system initiating a consent transaction with a party having authority to grant consent to update the access control list when the access control list indicates that consent does not exist to allow the client to access the item of user-specific information.

35. The system of claim 34 wherein the consent management system comprises a consent user interface for displaying a consent menu to the party having authority to update the access control list, said consent menu prompting the identified party to grant or deny consent to allow the client to access the item of user-specific information, whereby if the identified party grants consent the consent management system operatively updates the access control list to indicate that the client has consent to access the item of user-specific information.

36. The system of claim 35 wherein the consent management system further comprises a consent server associated with the consent user interface for determining the party having authority to update the access control list and for operatively updating the access control list if the identified party grants consent to allow the client to access the item of user-specific information.

37. The system of claim 35 wherein the consent menu identifies a plurality of menu entries comprising:

an identity of the client;

a method by which the client seeks to access the item of user-specific information; and

a purpose for which the client seeks to access the item of user-specific information.

38. The system of claim 37 wherein the plurality of menu entries further comprises a value proposition associated with the purpose for which the client desires to access the first item of user-specific information.

39. A system for controlling access to user-specific information in a network computing environment, said system comprising:

a user transmitting a task request;

a web-services provider providing a first service and a second service, said web-services provider maintaining a first of item of user-specific information associated with

the user in connection with the first service and a second item of user-specific information associated with the user in connection with the second service, said first and second services requiring consent before allowing access to the first and second items of user-specific information;

- 10 a client in digital communication with the user and receiving the task request, said client translating the task request into a first access request and a second access request, said first access request being directed to the first service and seeking access to the first item of user-specific information and said second access request being directed to the second service and seeking access to the second item of user-specific information; and
- 15 a consent management system being selectively invoked by the client if the client lacks consent to access the first item of user-specific information, said consent management system identifying a party with authority to grant consent to the client to access the first item of user-specific information and initiating a consent request transaction with the party with authority to grant consent to the client to access the first
- 20 item of user-specific information, said consent request transaction inviting the party with authority to grant consent to allow the client to access the first item of user-specific information.

40. The system of claim 39 wherein the consent management system further comprises a consent user interface for displaying a consent menu to the party with authority to grant consent to the client to access the first item of user-specific information.

41. The system of claim 40 wherein the consent menu identifies a plurality of menu entries comprising:

an identity of the client;

a method by which the client proposes to access the first item of user-specific

5 information; and

a purpose for which the client desires to access the first item of user-specific information.

42. The system of claim 41 wherein the plurality of menu entries further comprises a value proposition associated with the purpose for which the client desires to access the first item of user-specific information.

43. A method of controlling access to user-specific information for use in connection with a network computing environment including a web-services provider, a user of a service provided by the web-services provider, and a client of the web-services provider, said web-services provider maintaining a data store of user-specific information
5 associated with the user in connection with the service, and said client seeking access to an item of user-specific information in the data store and transmitting an access request message directed to the service and indicating the item of user-specific information in the data store to which the client seeks access, the method comprising:

10 comparing the access request message to an access control list associated with the service, said access control list identifying whether the client has permission to access the item of user-specific information;

placing the access request in a pending request queue;

15 transmitting a service response message to the client, said service response message indicating a fault if the access control list identifies that the client does not have permission to access the item of user-specific information and said service response message indicating a success if the access control list identifies that the client has permission to access the item of user-specific information;

invoking a consent management system if the service response message received by the client indicates a fault; and

20 filling the access request if the access control list authorizes the client to access the item of user-specific information in the data store and removing the access request from the pending request queue.

44. The method of claim 43 wherein invoking the consent management system further comprises:

identifying a party with authority to grant permission to the client to access the item of user-specific information; and

- 5 displaying a consent menu to the identified party with authority to grant permission, said consent menu prompting the identified party to grant or deny permission for the client to access the item of user-specific information.

45. The method of claim 44 wherein the identified party is the user of the service and wherein displaying a consent menu to the identified party comprises displaying the consent menu to the user.

46. The method of claim 44 wherein the identified party is an owner of the item of user-specific information and wherein displaying the consent menu to the identified party comprises displaying the consent menu to the owner.

47. The method of claim 44 wherein the user is a managed user and the identified party is a manager of the managed user and wherein displaying the consent menu to the identified party comprises displaying the consent menu to the manager of the managed user.

48. One or more computer-readable media having computer-executable instructions for performing the method recited in claim 43.